

# **Kentucky Marker Papers**

## **Primary – Grade 8**



**Kentucky Department  
of Education**

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**Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner  
Kentucky Department of Education**

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### **Kentucky Department of Education**

Linda Houghton,  
*Associate Commissioner of Office of Academic and Professional Development*  
Betty Edwards, *Director of Division of Curriculum Development*  
Starr Lewis, *Manager of Humanities Branch*  
Claudia Runge, *Writing Portfolio Consultant*  
Julie Whitaker, *Writing Portfolio Consultant*

### **Marker Paper Project Coordinators**

Ellen Lewis, *Writing Portfolio Specialist, Jefferson Co. Public Schools*  
Julia (Tish) Wilson, *Region 3 Writing Consultant*

### **Marker Paper Project Committee**

Sandy Adams, Rosenwald-Dunbar Elementary School, Jessamine Co.  
Claire Batt, Fayette Co. Public Schools  
Cindy Bradley, Whitney Young Elementary School, Jefferson Co.  
Nancy Brandenburg, W. R. McNeill Elementary School, Bowling Green Independent  
Joy Lynn Buckingham, Red Cross Elementary School, Barren Co.  
Janet Burks, Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School, Bowling Green Independent  
Lea Ann Crager, Argillite Elementary School, Greenup Co.  
Margie Eckerle, Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School, Jefferson Co.  
Robby Ewing, Goshen Elementary School, Oldham Co.  
Kimberly Flener, Ohio Co. Middle School, Ohio Co.  
Lisa Fowler, Nicholasville Elementary School, Jessamine Co.  
Alonzo Fugate, LBJ Elementary School, Breathitt Co.  
Kathy Godbey, Garrett Elementary School, Casey Co.  
Joy Graham, W. R. McNeill Elementary School, Bowling Green Independent  
Sandra Henry, Fairview High School, Fairview Independent  
Johnene Ison, Adams Middle School, Floyd Co.  
Kelly Jackson, Murray Middle School, Murray Independent  
Jane Labadie, Allen Co. Primary Center, Allen Co.  
Michelle Mazzei, Heath Middle School, McCracken Co.  
Susan Miller, Primary Writing Consultant, Kentucky Dept. of Education  
Carole Mullins, R. W. Combs Elementary School, Perry Co.  
Carla Mulvaney, Huntertown Elementary School, Woodford Co.  
Brenda Noble, Perry Co. Public Schools  
Robin Osborne, Greenville Elementary School, Muhlenberg Co.  
Brenda Philpott, Taylor Co. Elementary School, Taylor Co.  
Carol Porta, JCPS Gheens Academy, Jefferson Co.  
Patricia Sampson, Breckinridge-Franklin Elementary School, Jefferson Co.  
Vicki Werner, Heath Middle School, McCracken Co.  
Kim Wilson, Westport Middle School, Jefferson Co.  
Shelli Wilson, Taylor Elementary School, Bracken Co.  
Roxanne Wright, Crittenden Co. Elementary School, Crittenden Co.  
Linda Young, Crawford Middle School, Fayette Co.

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## A GUIDE FOR THE KENTUCKY MARKER PAPERS, GRADES P1 - 8

### **PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT**

The marker papers provide answers to these questions:

- What is good writing supposed to look like at the grade level I teach?
- What lessons should I teach to enable my students to become proficient writers?

### **CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT**

- **Marker Papers**

The marker papers are examples of proficient student work at each grade level, P1 - 8. The papers illustrate the progression of key writing skills in specific types of writing. Each piece is annotated to show the skills which the writer has demonstrated in that piece of writing.

The primary markers include a number of pieces to show progress made throughout each year of the primary program. The Grades 4 - 8 markers represent end-of-the-year writing, the result of a year of effective instruction. For example, a year of effective instruction should move a fifth grade student who had been assessed as a proficient fourth grade writer to the level of the grade 5 marker by the end of fifth grade.

Students' names and identifying factors such as school, county, and city have been removed or, in some cases, changed to retain the flow of the piece.

**These are not new benchmarks. The state benchmarks for writing at grades 4, 7, and 12 remain in place.**

- **Primary Developmental Continuum for each type of writing**

A Primary Developmental Continuum appears at the beginning of each set of primary marker papers: personal narrative, memoir, short story, informational writing, and persuasive writing.

Using Kentucky's criteria for writing, the Primary Developmental Continuum shows the progression of skills which students should demonstrate as they move through the primary program. These are skills which are demonstrated in the writing, not student behaviors which a teacher can observe as a student writes.

Each continuum begins with skills of the beginning writer whose writing is scribbles. The continuum moves through those beginning skills to the skills evidenced by a developing writer. The continuum ends with a list of skills which competent writers should demonstrate by the end of P4. Competent primary writers are on track to become proficient writers at grade 4. Annotations for each marker paper match the skills listed in the continuum. **It is important to note that the Primary Developmental Continuum is not a new scoring guide for state accountability.**

- **Grades 4 - 8 skills list for each type of writing**

A skills list for writing appears at the beginning of each set of grades 4 - 8 writing: personal narrative, memoir, short story, poem, article, letter, editorial.

Using Kentucky's criteria for writing, the grades 4 - 8 skills lists describe skills specific to each type of writing included in this document. As students move from grade to grade, they demonstrate growth in the control and complexity with which they use these skills. Annotations on each piece relate to the skills on the list for the specific type of writing

**These lists do not replace the Kentucky Holistic Scoring Guide for Writing.**

- **Next Lessons**

The Next Lessons, which appear at the end of each marker paper, reinforce the idea that teachers use student work to make decisions about instructional priorities. The Next Lessons suggest one or more skills which the student writer needs to learn in order to continue progressing. Because the marker papers are finished pieces, the Next Lessons are not conferencing notes but instead guides for future instruction.

- **Suggested Professional Resources**

While the marker papers can help teachers to see what is expected of their students and to decide what they should be teaching, the marker papers cannot explain how to teach. The comprehensive list of resources at the end of the document provides effective teaching strategies.

## **USE OF THE DOCUMENT**

In order to use these materials, you should:

1. Study the marker papers for a specific type of writing from beginning writing through grade 8. Read the annotations to notice how specific skills are demonstrated in each piece.
2. Locate the marker paper or papers which demonstrate the level of writing at which students at your grade level should be performing.
3. Read one of your student's pieces of writing to determine the skills which are evidenced in his/her writing.
4. Find the marker paper or papers which demonstrate a level of skills similar to those of your student.
5. Determine the next lessons to teach in order to enable the student to move toward the goal for his/her grade level.

**NOTE: Schools are cautioned not to break up the materials into separate grade levels for distribution.** Primary teachers need to have grade 4 and higher marker papers available to use as a measure for primary writers who are exceeding the proficient level for P4 students. Grades 4 - 8 teachers need to have primary materials available for use with students whose skills are below grade level.

# PRIMARY DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

SHORT STORY		Beginning	Developing	Competent (end of P4)
AUDIENCE/PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses topics from personal experiences and interests</li> <li>• engages in the act of writing without specific attention to meaning</li> <li>• experiments with marks on a page</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses topics from personal experiences and interests</li> <li>• begins to focus on a topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses topics from own experiences and interests</li> <li>• begins to focus on the topic</li> <li>• begins to express own feelings</li> <li>• begins to show some evidence of individual voice</li> <li>• begins to use titles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows awareness of reader's needs</li> <li>• chooses topics from a variety of sources, experiences, and interests</li> <li>• narrow topic</li> <li>• focuses on a purpose</li> <li>• uses individual voice and/or appropriate tone</li> <li>• creates a title that captures the essence of the piece and creates reader interest</li> </ul>
IDEA DEVELOPMENT/ SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses drawings, symbols, letter-like marks to represent words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begins to support ideas with drawings, symbols, one or two letters to represent a word</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supports ideas with pictures, simple phrases, one or two details</li> <li>• attempts some development of characters</li> <li>• attempts some description of setting</li> <li>• begins to use a conflict or problem/solution to develop plot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supports ideas with two or three relevant, specific details</li> <li>• develops setting</li> <li>• develops characters through thoughts, actions, description</li> <li>• develops plot through conflict or problem/solution</li> <li>• uses sensory details and imagery</li> <li>• uses dialogue when appropriate</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows some evidence of directionality (top to bottom, left to right)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates directionality</li> <li>• attempts to demonstrate a story line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates directionality</li> <li>• demonstrates some logical order</li> <li>• demonstrates a story line</li> <li>• has a beginning (lead), middle (body), end (conclusion)</li> <li>• borrows story structure from models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• places ideas and details in meaningful order</li> <li>• writes an engaging lead</li> <li>• writes an effective conclusion</li> <li>• uses paragraphs</li> <li>• uses some transition words and phrases</li> <li>• uses story structure</li> </ul>
SENTENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may use some letters, strings of random letters, and/or a few words to resemble a sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses letters, strings of random letters, and/or a few words to resemble a sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes some simple sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes complete sentences</li> <li>• uses a variety of sentence structures/lengths</li> </ul>
LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• labels pictures or produces simple text using symbols or letter-like marks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses word attempts or words to describe drawings</li> <li>• writes a few eight words, especially those with particular meaning to the writer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begins to use some descriptive language</li> <li>• shows some evidence of correct word usage (e.g., subject/verb agreement, correct use of "I" and "me")</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses language appropriate for the audience/purpose</li> <li>• uses descriptive and figurative language</li> <li>• makes few errors in usage</li> <li>• uses a variety of words effectively</li> </ul>
CORRECTNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lacks spacing</li> <li>• may use scribbles, letter-like marks, letter reversals, and/or strings of random letters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses some spacing between words</li> <li>• uses one or two letters to represent a word; uses other inventions or approximations to represent a word</li> <li>• begins a sentence (copied or dictated) with a capital letter</li> <li>• ends a sentence (copied or dictated) with correct punctuation</li> <li>• begins to show sound/letter correspondence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses more correct spelling, less invention and approximation</li> <li>• uses more correct capitalization</li> <li>• uses more correct end punctuation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes few errors in spelling</li> <li>• makes few errors in capitalization</li> <li>• makes few errors in punctuation</li> <li>• makes few errors in correctness that do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

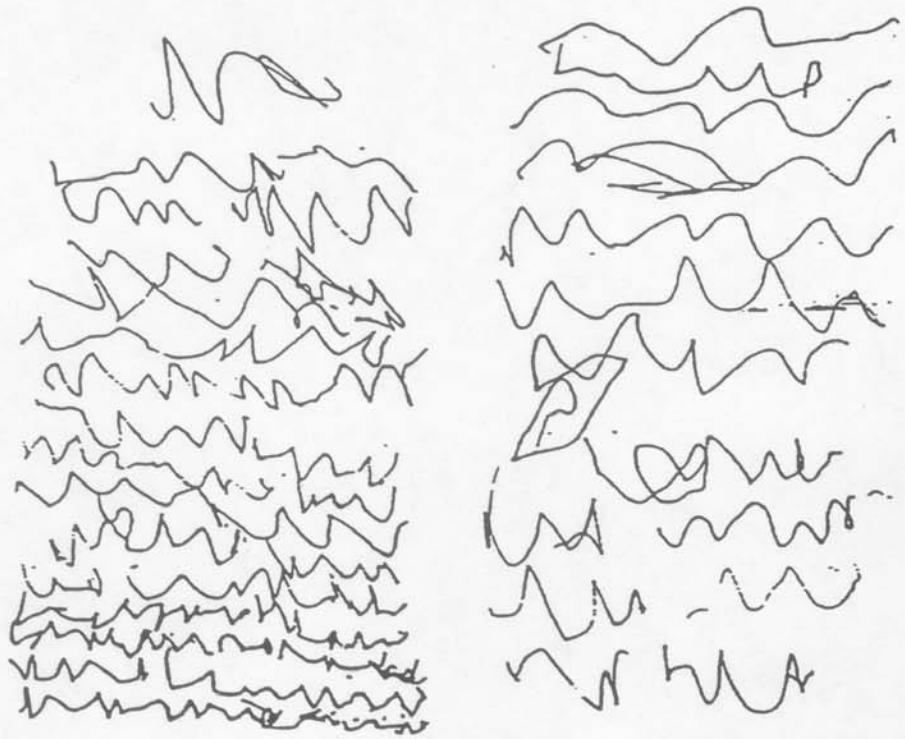
# SHORT STORY

## BEGINNING WRITING

AUDIENCE/PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses topics from personal experiences and interests</li> <li>• engages in the act of writing without specific attention to meaning</li> <li>• experiments with marks on a page</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses topics from personal experiences and interests</li> <li>• begins to focus on a topic</li> </ul>
IDEA DEVELOPMENT/ SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses drawings, symbols, letter-like marks to represent words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begins to support ideas with drawings, symbols, one or two letters to represent a word</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows some evidence of directionality (top to bottom, left to right)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates directionality</li> <li>• attempts to demonstrate a story line</li> </ul>
SENTENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may use some letters, strings of random letters, and/or a few words to resemble a sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses letters, strings of random letters, and/or a few words to resemble a sentence</li> </ul>
LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• labels pictures or produces simple text using symbols or letter-like marks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses word attempts or words to describe drawings</li> <li>• writes a few sight words, especially those with particular meaning to the writer</li> </ul>
CORRECTNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lacks spacing</li> <li>• may use scribbles, letter-like marks, letter reversals, and/or strings of random letters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses some spacing between words</li> <li>• uses one or two letters to represent a word; uses other inventions or approximations to represent a word</li> <li>• begins a sentence (copied or dictated) with a capital letter</li> <li>• ends a sentence (copied or dictated) with correct punctuation</li> <li>• begins to show sound/letter correspondence</li> </ul>

## BEGINNING - SHORT STORY

- experiments with marks on a page
- uses scribbles to represent words and sentences
- shows some evidence of directionality



### NEXT LESSONS:

- making the picture/word connection
- recognizing sound/letter correspondence



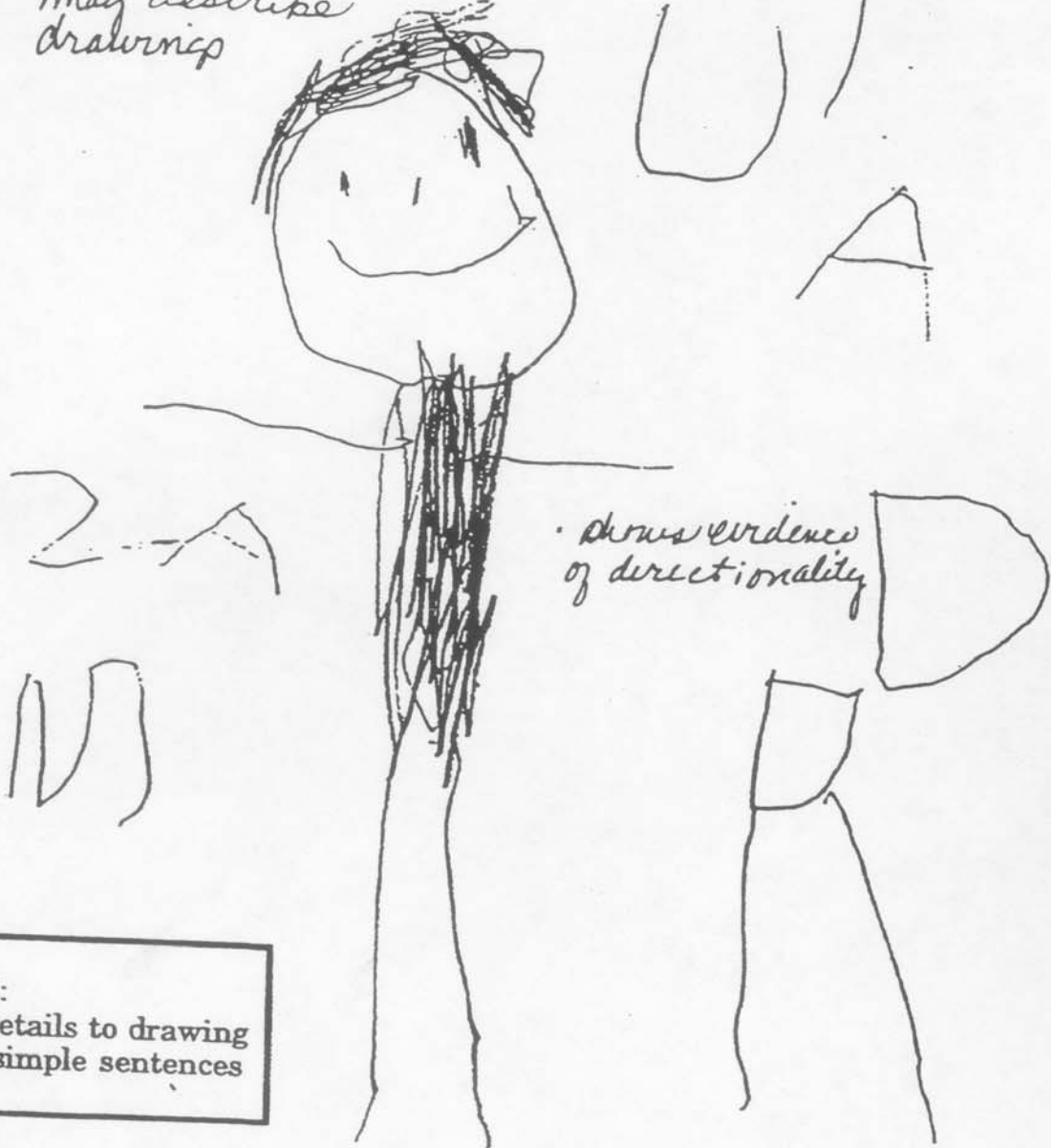
## BEGINNING - SHORT STORY

- chooses topic from personal experiences and interests

M A X

- writes a few sight words, especially those with meaning to the writer

- word attempts and words may describe drawings



### NEXT LESSONS:

- adding details to drawing
- writing simple sentences

## BEGINNING - SHORT STORY

- chooses topic from personal experiences and interests

IEc 100 ECBPCPBICR  
cBECBR R PCBE  
CICBEBEA EAECBPC  
|aBBLohmhbcBCCdk  
Ibar n amamc

• lacks spacing

• writes strings  
of random  
letters

Pa B b a a  
Ba B P W ( ) ) )



- labels pictures using symbols  
or letter-like marks
- demonstrates directionality

### NEXT LESSONS:

- connecting letter/sound/word
- building sight word vocabulary

## BEGINNING - SHORT STORY

- chooses topic and focuses on topic
- word attempt describes drawing
- demonstrates some directionality



### NEXT LESSONS:

- writing complete thoughts
- exploring models of print

## BEGINNING - SHORT STORY

- uses strings of letters to resemble sentences and approximate print

- produces simple text using letters and letter-like marks

- supports idea(s) with drawings

- uses a sight word relevant to writer

- shows some left to right directionality



### NEXT LESSONS:

- writing sentences
- recognizing letter/sound/word correspondence

## BEGINNING - SHORT STORY

- chooses and focuses on a topic
- uses one or two letters, <sup>inventions,</sup>  
and other approximations to represent a word

The S T R R <sup>• uses  
a title</sup>

f<sup>o</sup> The

- begins to borrow  
story structure  
from models

f Sh

- uses some spacing

W  
No  
PS

Translation (as told to teacher)

"The Story of the Fish with no Friends"



TR  
WZ 2



- uses drawings, symbols to support idea(s)

A  
fsh  
WZD

- uses problem/solution
- uses characters

Translation (as told to teacher)

"There was a fish with no friends."



• uses some sight words

• begins to demonstrate a storyline (beginning, middle, end)

• uses some spacing

Translation (as told to the teacher)

"The fish was very sad."



Translation (as told to the teacher)  
"But then there was a mermaid."

T n The  
f'sh AST

The  
M M  
F S W

Translation (as told to teacher) R F B  
"Then the fish asked  
the mermaid if she  
would be her friend."

**NEXT LESSONS:**

- writing complete sentences
- building sight vocabulary

## BEGINNING - SHORT STORY

- chooses topic from personal experiences, interests

DAYS WITH <sup>creates title</sup>

- focuses on a topic

RANE.

TITLE PAGE

- begins to demonstrate a story line with a beginning, middle, and end



IT WAS  
A SUNNY  
DAY.


- demonstrates understanding of directionality

Pg. 1

- uses drawings to support ideas



- borrows story structure from models



• uses spacing between words

IT CAME  
A BIG #  
HERACAN.  
IT LITING.

• uses some simple sentences

• uses sight words as well as inventions and approximations

pg. 2



• begins sentences with a capital letter

• uses end punctuation

IT WAS  
ASUNNY DAY  
BUT IT  
RELATIVE TA BIG  
RANE.

**NEXT LESSONS:**

- supporting ideas with relevant details
- adding characters to a story

# SHORT STORY

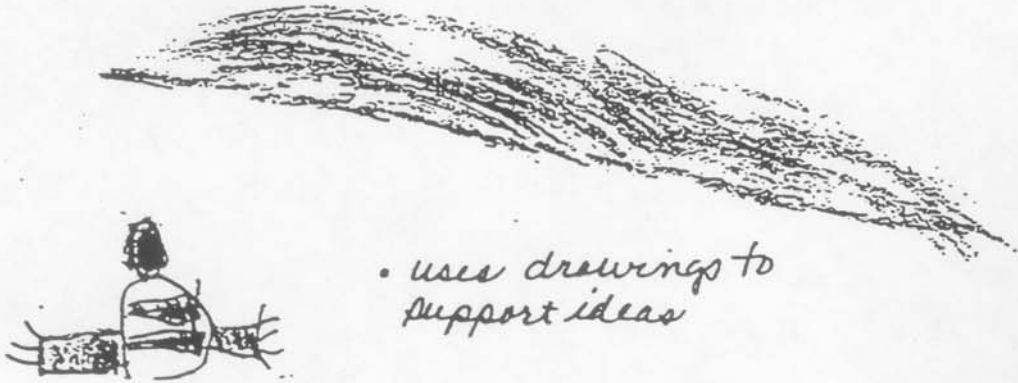
## DEVELOPING WRITING

AUDIENCE/PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses topics from own experiences and interests</li> <li>• begins to focus on the topic</li> <li>• begins to express own feelings</li> <li>• begins to show some evidence of individual voice</li> <li>• begins to use titles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begins to show awareness of reader's needs</li> <li>• chooses topic from experiences and interests</li> <li>• narrows topic</li> <li>• focuses on a purpose</li> <li>• uses individual voice and/or appropriate tone</li> <li>• uses title</li> </ul>
IDEA DEVELOPMENT/ SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supports ideas with pictures, simple phrases, one or two details</li> <li>• attempts some development of characters</li> <li>• attempts some description of setting</li> <li>• begins to use a conflict or problem/solution to develop plot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supports ideas with one or two relevant, specific details</li> <li>• shows more description of setting</li> <li>• shows more description of characters</li> <li>• shows more use of conflict or problem/solution to develop plot</li> <li>• uses some sensory detail and imagery</li> <li>• attempts to use dialogue when appropriate</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates directionality</li> <li>• demonstrates some logical order</li> <li>• demonstrates a story line</li> <li>• has a beginning (lead), middle (body), end (conclusion)</li> <li>• borrows story structure from models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates logical order</li> <li>• attempts to develop an engaging lead</li> <li>• attempts to develop an effective conclusion</li> <li>• begins to use paragraphs</li> <li>• begins to use transitions</li> <li>• uses story structure</li> </ul>
SENTENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes some simple sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes complete sentences</li> <li>• begins to use some variety in sentence structure/length</li> </ul>
LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• begins to use some descriptive language</li> <li>• shows some evidence of correct word usage (e.g., subject/verb agreement, correct use of "I" and "me")</li> <li>• begins to use a variety of words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses some descriptive and figurative language</li> <li>• demonstrates frequent, correct word usage (e.g., subject/verb agreement, correct use of "I" and "me")</li> <li>• uses a variety of words</li> </ul>
CORRECTNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses spacing between words</li> <li>• uses sight words as well as inventions and approximations</li> <li>• begins sentence with capital letter</li> <li>• uses end punctuation</li> <li>• shows sound/letter correspondence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses more correct spelling, less invention and approximation</li> <li>• uses more correct capitalization</li> <li>• uses more correct end punctuation</li> </ul>

## DEVELOPING - SHORT STORY

The terta. <sup>creates a title</sup>  
• chooses and focuses on topic

ONE DAY I WAS PLAYING IN A CREEK.



AND I FOUND A TERTAL NEWUS,  
EATING A COFISH

• Beginning to demonstrate a story line (beginning, middle, and end)

• demonstrates directionality



I went home and got some gills

- shows sound/letter correspondence

- uses drawings to support ideas



and I went back to the creek

**NEXT LESSONS:**

- using descriptive language
- using details



Was the teal stit there?  
 Was the crofish stit here?



• shows evidence  
 of individual  
 voice



The teal WAS stit here  
 but the crofish WERE not • uses some spacing  
 THE CROFISH WAS in the  
 teal's swim.



• borrows story structure from models



## DEVELOPING - SHORT STORY

- chooses and focuses on a topic

- attempts to use paragraph  
↓  
Lost Their Voice ← • creates a title
- uses problem/solution to develop plot  
One cold snowy day a lion and a monkey and a horse and a City. Dulka and a fish. They lose their voice watching a parade cheering at the parade. They went back home and ate chicken noodle. Soup and drank lemon tea. and went to bed. The next morning they get their voice back ← • solution
- supports ideas with simple phrases
- demonstrates some logical order

- use capital letters at the beginning of the sentence
- use end punctuation

The End

- begins to use some variety in sentences

### NEXT LESSONS:

- developing a character
- developing a setting



## DEVELOPING - SHORT STORY

- chooses and narrows topic
- focuses on topic

- creates a title

One day Katie found a dog

- introduces a character and setting

in her back yard! She played with it.

The next day dad took

- uses problem/solution to develop plot

him away! Katie cried so

- shows evidence of individual voice

hard that she disappeared!

- uses inventions and approximations in spelling

Win dad got home he didn't

see her! He couldn't find her but

- shows evidence of logical order

- supports ideas with one or two details

they coont find her! Soda  
got the dog! It fawnd her  
Dad let her hav the wandr full  
Dog! She had billyins uv fun

• has a beginning, middle, and end

• shows some correct word usage

• begins sentences with a capital letter

• ends sentences with correct punctuation

#### NEXT LESSONS:

- using paragraphs
- using descriptive language

## DEVELOPING - SHORT STORY

- chooses, narrows, and focuses on a topic

little Elephants Bad day <sup>creates a little</sup>  
One day little elephant  
was at school. He had  
tests all day and did not.

<sup>• uses problem/solution to develop plot</sup>  
get any reeses. When <sup>• uses transitions</sup> he  
got home his mom was  
not there and she did not  
leave him a popcicle to eat.

When she got home

- supports ideas with one or two details

- demonstrates some development of characters

she was tired. Little elephant  
 mother was very pretty she  
 had beautiful ears that always  
 stood up and she always had  
 beautiful, making with lots of colors <sup>• uses approximations</sup>  
 and she was always smiling.  
 But right then little elephants  
 mother ears were down. Her

- uses descriptive language
- uses complete sentences
- uses varied sentences

• uses a variety of words

make up was smeared all over  
her face. They had left  
overs for supper. Then

she told little elephant to

go to take a bath she said

be sure to wash behind your ears. <sup>• begins to use dialogue</sup>  
After that brush your

tusk. then get to bed.

• begins sentences with capital letters  
• uses correct end punctuation

- has a beginning, middle, and end
- demonstrates logical order

The next day was Saturday  
 little elephant got up early  
 trying not to wake up  
 mother. Little elephant thought  
 since I'm up why don't  
 I make mother breakfast  
 in bed. little elephant  
 said I will fix mother



- some focus on a purpose

cearel and toast. So as  
little elephant went to get  
a bowl they went big bang  
pong. But the he got some cereal  
and milk. He pored it together  
in the bowl and put some toast  
on the toaster and brought it  
to mother. Soon it was no  
longer a bad day.

NEXT LESSONS:

- writing engaging leads
- writing effective conclusions

## DEVELOPING - SHORT STORY

- chooses topic
- uses some descriptive language
- has few errors that do not interfere with meaning

### → Sarah's Favorite Christmas

- uses paragraphs Long ago there was a little girl named Sarah Smith who was nine years old. She knew that in a couple of weeks it would be her favorite holiday, Christmas. She thought that the best part of Christmas was the beautiful Christmas lights. She liked the blue ones the most. This Christmas was going to be the best she had ever had. Well, she hoped it would be.
- has a beginning
- uses transitions → The next morning Sarah went to school in the cold snow. Once she was in the schoolhouse she was as warm as she could be. When the lesson was started Sarah had her mind on the Christmas turkey. She was thinking about the wonderful smell of the delicious turkey. And when her teacher called on her to answer a question she answered the question with a simple reply "good turkey". All the children laughed at her. *• evidence of voice*
- uses some sensory detail
- uses a variety of words On the way home a young boy knocked her down on the cold snow. She was so angry. When she had arrived home her mother was putting up the Christmas tree. Once a week had passed she seemed more excited than ever. Her present was the first present under the tree. Until her father brought her mother's present in. It was Christmas Day. So Sarah ran down stairs to see what Santa had brought her. In her stocking was a candy cane, a plum and a cute little doll. And she got to open the present under the Christmas tree. This really was the best Christmas she had ever had!
- demonstrates logical order
- writes complete sentences
- uses a variety of sentence structures/lengths

#### NEXT LESSONS:

- using dialogue correctly
- writing a middle and end

## DEVELOPING - SHORT STORY

- chooses a topic
- uses individual voice

Lost in the Future • creates a title

• uses a  
problem/  
solution

Once upon a time my brother and I found a machine in a dump. It was snaking and it weird. we saw a button and it said something on it. My brother just wiped it and I just pushed his hand.

The machine just started. It also sounded weird, my brother and I started turning a purple color. Then, all of the sudden we saw a black and purple hairy thing. We went in a market and there was a purple and pink hairy monsters. It looked like there were little people under the tables.

• has a  
beginning,  
middle,  
and end

I asked a monster "What year it was and what state we were in." The monster said, "Its year 2010 and your in Florida." My brother and I said, together "COOL!" Then, we said, "Can we stay here? The monster said, "I don't care."

• uses  
dialogue

Then, we saw our mom and dad come. They said, "Where are we?" We said, "Your in Florida, and the year is 2010." They said, "COOL CAN WE STAY?" We said, "Can we stay?" They said, "You can stay."

• variety of  
sentence  
structures/  
lengths

So we stayed they, a few days later I woke up, and looked in the mirror. I was a purple and pink hairy thing! So was mom, dad, and brother. I woke them up. We said, "Lets build a time machine and get out of here and get back to the year 1999 and the state Kentucky."

• uses  
paragraphing

We found metal and a steering wheel. My brother and dad built the time machine. My mom and I got our clothes, and stuff like that. We got in the time machine. My dad forgot to make a key, we waited. My dad finally got the key made. He started it, and we all turned a purple color. It started shaking again, we saw a peson. It was my brother's friend with my friend. They were happy to see us. My brother and I made a decision. We decided to never touch buttons that we didn't know what they did.

• some  
attempt  
to develop  
an effective conclusion

- uses end punctuation
- uses more correct capitalization

### NEXT LESSONS:

- using descriptive language
- developing characters

## SHORT STORY

### COMPETENT (end of P4) WRITING

AUDIENCE/PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows awareness of the reader's needs</li> <li>• chooses topics from a variety of sources, experiences, and interests</li> <li>• narrows topic</li> <li>• focuses on a purpose</li> <li>• uses individual voice and/or appropriate tone</li> <li>• creates a title that captures the essence of the piece and creates reader interest</li> </ul>
IDEA DEVELOPMENT/ SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supports ideas with two or three relevant, specific details</li> <li>• develops setting</li> <li>• develops characters through thoughts, actions, description</li> <li>• develops plot through conflict or problem/solution</li> <li>• uses sensory details and imagery</li> <li>• uses dialogue when appropriate</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• places ideas and details in meaningful order</li> <li>• writes an engaging lead</li> <li>• writes an effective conclusion</li> <li>• uses paragraphs</li> <li>• uses some transition words and phrases</li> <li>• uses story structure</li> </ul>
SENTENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writes complete sentences</li> <li>• uses a variety of sentence structures/lengths</li> </ul>
LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chooses language appropriate for the audience/purpose</li> <li>• uses descriptive and figurative language</li> <li>• makes few errors in usage</li> <li>• uses a variety of words effectively</li> </ul>
CORRECTNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes few errors in spelling</li> <li>• makes few errors in capitalization</li> <li>• makes few errors in punctuation</li> <li>• makes few errors in correctness that do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

- chooses, narrows, and focuses a topic
- focuses on a purpose
- uses individual voice

How the Scared Scarecrow Was Scared ' ← creates a title

Once there was a scarecrow.

The scarecrow had a problem.

He was scared. He was scared of

crows. Every time he saw a crow

he yelled, "Help, help!" the next day

a snake came by just then a crow

was about to land on the scarecrow,

the scared scarecrow looked up

The crow landed right on the

scared scarecrow. You know what the

- begins to show awareness of audience/reader's needs
- has a beginning, middle, and end

• uses problem/solution to set up problem

• attempts to develop an engaging

• supports ideas with one or two relative details

• uses dialogue

• uses transitions



scarecrow did. He yelled, Help, Help. <sup>dialogue</sup>  
He began to cry. And the crow left.  
The snake said, <sup>66</sup>Why are you  
scared of a crow? If you are a <sup>was</sup> <sup>dialogue</sup>  
crow, then you shall not be scared.  
That is why you are called a  
scarecrow. But how can I not be  
scared? said the scarecrow. <sup>66</sup>All the  
crows are just crows. When you see  
a crow just look like you are a



turnaround

statue and then when the crow  
comes on you, make a loud noise  
that will scare the crows. So that  
is what the scared scarecrow did.  
From now on the scared  
scarecrow was no longer called  
the scared scarecrow.

- uses more correct punctuation
- uses more correct spelling and capitalization
- writes complete sentences

NEXT LESSONS:

- using descriptive language
- developing a character

## COMPETENT (P4) - SHORT STORY

- chooses, narrows, and focuses on a topic
- focuses on a purpose

A Shot ← • creates a title

- uses sensory details

Joe was outside with his mom. It was a cold clear night as it always was in Colorado. Joe's dad had gone on a business trip.

- shows some description of setting
- supports ideas with two or three relevant details

"Just yesterday it seemed a lot warmer," said Joe's mom. Joe had brown hair and, brown eyes just like his mother. Joe was feeling kind of cold so he asked.

"Can we go home now?"

"Sure," replied Joe's mom.

When they got home Joe went up to his room. His room had colorful wallpaper and, a goldfish tank at the end of it. Joe's mom called Joe to dinner. Joe's face was pale and, he was cold.

- uses individual voice / appropriate tone

"Are you okay?" asked Joe's mom.

"Yes," replied Joe.

They ate dinner quietly. Then Joe went upstairs, brushed his teeth and went to bed. It took Joe a long time to fall asleep.

- uses transitions

The next day when Joe woke up and, he wasn't feeling very good. He thought that he'd better tell his mom. He went downstairs and, told his mom. When Joe's mom heard this she sighed.

- shows some character development

"I go make an appointment with the doctor, but for

- uses problem/solution to develop plot
- uses paragraphs

- places ideas and details in meaningful order
- writes a beginning, middle, and end

now go back to bed."

- writes complete, varied sentences

Joe suddenly remembered when he was four years old. He had the fever and, he went to the doctor. The doctor told him he was going to give him a shot. The doctor had to hold him down and then the doctor came in with a needle. It had hurt so much he fell off the table he was sitting on. The next thing Joe knew his mom was calling him to go to the doctor. Joe was tired and, felt sick but he didn't want to go to the doctor.

Joe's mom drove Joe to the doctor. The thirty minute drive seemed like hours to Joe. When they arrived at the doctor he went straight to the doctors office. The doctor checked Joe everywhere.

- uses dialogue

"You have a sore throat," he said. "I'll have to give you a shot."

The doctor went out of the room and came back with a needle.

"It'll only take a second," he said.

- demonstrates correct word usage

Just like when I was four he thought. He waited for the pain but, felt nothing.

"It's over!" the doctor said.

"Good," replied Joe.

Joe felt dizzy so he decided to sleep. He slept all the way home. When Joe saw his mom in front of him. He

- uses a variety of words

told her about the shot and, he said. "I'll go to bed early."

"Without dinner?" she asked.

"Yeah, I'm not real hungry," and, with that he went to bed.

The next day he was feeling good again. He told his mom.

"Maybe because of the shot," she said.

"Maybe," Joe replied.

- *has few errors in spelling, capitalization and punctuation*

**NEXT LESSONS:**

- using descriptive language
- creating an effective lead

## SHORT STORY

### GRADES 4 - 8

The writer of a proficient short story demonstrates most or all of the following skills:

#### AUDIENCE/PURPOSE

- meets the reader's needs and expectations by adhering to the conventions of a short story
- focuses on the purpose
- narrows topic enough to be developed fully in a short story
- uses an individual voice
- creates a title which captures the essence of the piece and creates reader interest

#### IDEA DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT

- develops characters through thoughts, actions, descriptions
- develops the plot through conflict and resolution
- uses dialogue to develop character and plot
- describes setting; creates a mood
- employs literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, symbolism)
- uses sensory details

#### ORGANIZATION

- writes an engaging lead
- places ideas and details in meaningful order
- organizes the story into paragraphs
- uses transitions between ideas
- maintains coherence and unity
- concludes effectively

#### SENTENCES

- writes complete and varied sentences

#### LANGUAGE

- chooses language appropriate to the audience and purpose
- uses descriptive language
- maintains consistent verb tense
- makes subjects and verbs agree
- employs correct usage

#### CORRECTNESS

- spells correctly
- uses correct end punctuation, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes
- capitalizes correctly
- makes few errors in correctness which do not interfere with the meaning of the piece

As students move from grade to grade, they demonstrate growth in the control and complexity with which they use these skills.

GRADE 4 - SHORT STORY

# Turkey Disguise

• has elements of a short story

Story is told in chronological order.

Specific details create a picture for reader and connect to what happens in story.

Setting detail is important to conflict.

Lead sets up conflict; story focuses on Turkey's effort to escape farmer.

descriptive language

Transition

Details provide continuity.

Varied sentences

It was the day before Thanksgiving. I was walking in the woods, when all of a sudden a shot hit 3 of my feathers off. I started running and I ran right into a garbage can. There was a banana peel and a lot of egg shells. I was on something soft in the pizza box. I was still for awhile, until someone passed the garbage can saying "where did that turkey go?" I gulped softly.

When a couple of minutes passed, I got up and pushed the garbage can over. The sunlight shown on a hat and a worn out stuffed teddy bear inside the pizza box that I was in.



Dialogue  
advances  
plot.

I ran to my best friend's house. "Hi Broc," I said. "Hi Gobble," said Broc. "Broc, I almost got killed today!" "How?" asked Broc. "This guy came out from behind a tree and shot off three of my feathers!"

Why don't you get a disguise. effective language  
A disguise! That's it! Thanks buddy! Got to leave, bye.

I ran back to the garbage can and pulled out the stuffed bear. there was a piece of gum on one of the teddy bear's claws. I pulled off the piece of gum. I pulled out the hat, a banana peel was in it, so I took it out. I zipped the bear open and took all the stuffing out. I then put on the worn out bear suit. I put on the hat, I walked over and got a stick for a cane.

effective  
language

Details  
continue  
to develop  
the plot.

Details  
show  
Gobble's  
resourceful-  
ness.

I wanted to see if it worked.  
 So I walked past a farmer.  
 The farmer said "Hi kid, Halloween  
 is over!" Then he passed me. I  
 laughed with excitement and I was  
thrilled.

Details  
 develop  
 character  
 of Gobble.

resolves  
 conflict

I ran home and my parents  
 did not recognize me. So I showed  
 that it was me and I told them  
 what happened.

Transition

Then I called Broc. I  
 told him what I found and we  
 invited Broc and his parents  
 to Thanksgiving dinner. We  
 were so thankful that the  
 farmers didn't get us this  
 year.

Connects to  
 lead

Correct sentences and usage; some  
 errors in punctuation of dialogue;  
 no other patterns of errors

#### NEXT LESSONS:

- using a variety of methods to develop characters
- using strong verbs

# Showdown Sam

Title, illustrations, and lead set up surprise twist for reader.



Title captures essence of story and creates reader interest.

Story is told in chronological order.

Topic is narrow enough to be developed in a short story.

Details develop Sam's character.

A long time ago back (when the west was wild), there lived a mean buckaroo by the name of Showdown Sam. Sam constantly bragged about how he was the fastest draw on this side of the Mississippi. He even offered to challenge anyone who doubted his opinion. But no one did, because he was the best draw on this side of the Mississippi.

Language reflects setting.

Lead provides foreshadowing of conflict.

Varied Sentences

One day while Sam was sitting at the local saloon drinking a round of milk he was startled by a large noise from outside. He walked across the creaky floorboards and through the swinging saloon doors to the dusty roads that lie in front of the dry building. There he saw a kid. He couldn't be too old.

Descriptive language creates mood.

He yelled, "Hey kid, what's the name!"



"The name's, Kid, Cody the Kid. I'm looking for an old guy. Sam is his name. He claims to be the quickest draw this side of the Mississippi," replied the kid.

*Dialogue  
advances  
plot*

With this reply, Sam could feel his anger build, and told him his name. "You're looking at him boy," screamed Sam.

*character  
development*

The kid then challenged Sam to a draw that afternoon at the town square. Sam excepted and went off to sharpen his pencil.

*conflict  
established*



*clue to reader  
that this will not  
be a gunfight  
as expected*

transition

Later that evening, Sam and Cody met right at the dead center of the town. People were gathered around to witness the event.

Language is appropriate for setting.

"We'll start when the clock strikes six," Sam told Cody.

transition

As soon as the clock struck, dust was all anyone could see for at least five minutes. When the dust cleared, there stood both of the men with their drawings. The crowd was awed by Sam's portrait of a cowgirl on a horse, however, they marveled at Cody's cowboy riding a bull in a rodeo.

Plot twist is revealed.

Illustrations support the plot.



With applause, it was evident that Cody had won the contest. From that day on the west knew a new name, the name of Kid, Cody the Kid, the quickest draw in the west!

resolution of conflict



Sam got on his horse and rode into the sunset, never to be seen again.

*few errors in correctness*

*Conclusion is appropriate for genre of a western.*

**NEXT LESSONS:**

- using details to heighten suspense
- using commas in complex sentences



Story is told in  
chronological order.

## GRADE 5 - SHORT STORY

title captures essence  
of the story.

### Overnight In The School

Lead  
establishes  
conflict.

"I really don't care at all!" replied Ashley Hardy in her snobby sing-songy voice.  
"Really I don't!"

character  
development

"Well then,.... then, I hate you, you big jerk!" growled Lindsey fiercely.

character  
development

Their friends watched in tiresome silence as they threw more crude remarks to each other. Ashley and Lindsey had been fighting now for 5 years, every since they were in Kindergarten. It all started on that first day when there was a battle about a yellow crayon, and now they are 10 years old and still at it. No doubt about it, their friends were getting sick of it!

character  
development  
underscores  
pettiness of  
the argument

transition

That day at lunch Lindsey started bragging about staying all night in the school!  
"Sure, right, yeah, uh huh!" were only some of the replies she was getting. Just as she was beginning to get incredibly mad... A daresome boy looked up and said, "I DARE YOU!"

character  
development

Now Lindsey Jackson was not one to chicken out of a dare, so ever so sinisterly she replied, "I Accept!"

character  
development

transition

Of course everything can't always go perfectly in people's plans, and of course like all things, this one didn't go perfect either. What Lindsey didn't know was that her all time opponet, Ashley Hardy was overhearing every word of her conversation. She decided that she would just have to stay too, and make sure that Lindsey stayed, and kept her promise.

Details show  
lack of  
trust  
between  
the girls.

establishes  
plot

transition

The day seemed to drag along ever so slowly, 3:05 seemed to take days not hours.

Lindsey crouched into her position, little did she know Ashley was very close. They waited until 4:00 for the teachers to file out slowly. The janitors remained until 4:30. The girls found themselves getting impatient, but soon they found themselves, after the very last light switched off, and the very last door closed, alone in the school building.

Details  
advance  
plot.

strong  
verbs

transition

As Lindsey realized what was going on, she jumped up, and let out a big yell,  
"Oh, yes!"

- Varied sentence structure throughout
- correct punctuation of dialogue
- few errors in correctness

## strong verbs throughout

Ashley yelled, "Just be quiet you little show off!"

"Hey what are you doing here?" asked Lindsey.

"Exactly the question I was going to ask you!" replied Ashley.

"Well, don't think you can come to me whining when you get scared!" Lindsey insisted.

"Well, just don't worry Miss Lindsey! Don't you worry!"

*transition* Meanwhile, Lindsey ventured into the usual busy but now still hallway. She decided to do something she always wanted to do. She took a deep breath as she approached the boys bathroom.

"I'll just show her," Ashley thought to herself flipping the television to MTV. Hmm! Imagine me getting scared, and running to her. The NERVE!

"How disgusting!" Lindsey thought to herself as she exited the boy's bathroom. It wasn't nearly as exciting as she had planned and it had a horrible odor.

Ashley was beginning to have a horrible headache from listening to Alanis Morissette, a famous rap singer, bang out tunes. About that time, she heard it, a horrible bolt of lightning and thunder. Ashley jumped and apparently Lindsey heard it too. The lights blinked. Oh no, this wasn't suppose to happen. Then the lights went off and stayed out.

*transition* Ashley remembered seeing flashlights in the Teachers Lounge for emergency use. This was definitely an emergency! She made her way slowly and carefully to the teacher's lounge but her heart was sprinting to get some relief.

Lindsey on the other hand, wandered around the dark school. "Oh!" she thought, "what was that noise? Nothing, right? Of course... why, what could be in this school building this late?"

Ashley didn't know where she was going, but she wished she wasn't there at this moment. She felt something brush against her leg. "Oh!" she shrieked. It was only a fern bush. Wow, what a relief.

Dialogue captures voices of characters and develops the conflict.

Details advance plot.

Continues to contrast the characters

strong  
verbs

Lindsey heard the scream, too. She looked behind her and started to tiptoe down the hall. Although she'd never admit, she was scared stiff. Ashley was beginning to get panicky. She looked behind her, and broke into a run. BOOM! The two girls collided into each other going at full speed. "You klutz!" said Lindsey.

character  
development

"Well, you're one too!" replied Ashley.

"Ok, Ok, I am starving, I need something to eat!" "Do you know where anything to eat is?" pleaded Lindsey.

Dialogue  
captures  
the conflict.

"Well, even if I did why would I tell you?" boasted Ashley.

"Please, pretty please." begged Lindsey.

"Okay, in the Teachers Lounge!" confessed Ashley.

transition

They raced to the Teachers Lounge. Lindsey got there just before Ashley did, and made her way to the refrigerator to find that it was totally empty except a bologna sandwich, a pack of ketchup, and the remainders of a Slim Fast.

Details add  
to believability  
of story.

"Uh, I'm going to barf!" hollered Ashley.

"Really, there is nothing in the refrigerator!" yelled Lindsey.

"Ditto for the cabinets!" replied Ashley.

"Great, all we have is old bologna, old tuna fish and crackers, a pack of ketchup, and the remainders of a Slim Fast."

"Our special for tonight is, very old bologna, and tuna fish with stale crackers on the side." mimicked Ashley.

"Check please!" ordered Lindsey.

transition Just as the girls were beginning to enjoy themselves, they heard something.

CREAKkkkk!

"What was that?" questioned Ashley.

"It was just the wind or something, right?" replied Lindsey.

CREAKkkkk! BOOMmmm!

"That, that wasn't the wind" Ashley said getting hoarse.

The "shared  
hunger"  
experience  
begins to  
draw the  
girls  
together,  
setting up  
the next  
scene.

figurative  
language

strong verbs

"Uh, Uh!" assured Lindsey.

CREAKkkk! BOOMmmm! BANGggg!

Transition

"Run!" screamed Ashley.

They ran to the front door, and stared out into the dark and creepy schoolyard.

There in the moonlight appeared a figure. The moon reflected behind the creature so only the shape could be seen.

descriptive  
language

"Is it a burglar?" Lindsey thought to herself.

"Could it be Freddy Crooger?" Ashley thought remembering the gruesome movie

"Nightmare On Elm Street." Ashley shivered and hoped it wasn't.

Details  
enhance  
mood.

The creature was carrying a cane, and wearing a ragged trench coat. Smoke came from its lips, and it had only one big red eye. Ashley was sure she saw a piece of it fall to the ground.

"OOooh!" she shuddered her spine tickling from fright.

Details  
develop  
plot.

The girls slowly backed away from the door, then turned and sprinted to the girls bathroom. They stopped to catch their breath.

BOOMmmm! BANGggg! CRASHhhh! CLANKkkk! CREAKkkk!

"Wh-What was that?" questioned Ashley.

"I don't know, but it's getting closer!" Lindsey replied.

"Eek!" shrieked Ashley.

The outside door to the bathroom creaked.

"Yipes!" yelled Lindsey.

There at their own feet stood the... The Janitor??

"Hey, what are you doing in here?" he asked.

"Um, er, well, we, uh, kinda, sorta, had, well, you know a problem that, we, kind of"

stuttered Ashley.

effective  
dialogue

"Well, spit it out, you little brats, you're wasting my time, I came to check the back door,

strong  
verbs

and here you are!" the janitor snapped.

"We were planning on staying all night in the school!" Lindsey said much cooler than she really felt.

"We're really sorry, and we'll leave right now if you want us to," apologized Ashley.

"Really we will!" put in Lindsey.

"Nope, nobody's going anywhere until I get some names!" the Janitor insisted.

"Oh, our names are..." led on Ashley.

*transition* And at that moment Lindsey had a great idea. "We, err...." she stuttered coming closer to the open door. As she grabbed Ashley's hand, they dunked between the janitor's legs.

"Hey, get back here!" he commanded.

"Ha, Ha, you'll never get our names now!" Lindsey yelled.

*transition* On the way home Lindsey broke the silence by saying, "You know Ashley that was really great, about you knowing where the flashlights and food was."

*unity -  
recalls  
earlier  
scene*

"Not even half as good as when you had the idea of escaping through the janitor's legs!" Ashley insisted.

*Dialogue  
resolves  
conflict.*

"Well, I suppose we both did pretty well," Lindsey replied.

"Friends?" Ashley proposed.

"Friends!" answered Lindsey.

"Hey, it's too bad we really didn't get to stay all night in the school!" Ashley said.

"Don't worry about it; I'm planning on hitting the library next!"

Ashley felt stunned whoa! "Look up," she called. The sun had risen.

"Bye Ashley!"

"Bye!" Lindsey called back.

*transition* Ashley walked in her house, "How was Monica's?" Ashley's mother called.

"Great!" she stuttered.

*Very effective  
conclusion* "I called!" her Mother said.  
Ashley's eyes went wide.....

*typical of a mother's  
character*

*Surprise twist at  
end adds to  
believability of  
story; end  
answers reader's  
question about  
how the girls  
accounted to  
their parents  
about staying out  
all night.*

#### NEXT LESSONS:

- deleting unnecessary dialogue
- using a variety of ways to create a title



Plot is limited enough to be fully developed in a short story. GRADE 6 - SHORT STORY

Story is told in chronological order.

## THE HAUNTED CHRISTMAS TREE

Title captures essence of the story and creates reader interest.

Setting details create mood.

It was a cold blustery night, every child on Side-street was supposed to be in bed. Most were asleep dreaming of the toys that would await them in the morning. In the Keeps house hold 7 year-old Mary and 4 year-old Sara Keeps are wide awake when everyone else is asleep (or so they thought).

foreshadowing

uses dialogue to develop characters

"Mary, button my nightgown," Sara asked frustrated.

"Sara you've ripped the top button. Wait here, I'm going to get a safety pin to close the hole," Mary answered, gently chuckling as she walked down the hall to the bathroom.

Sara sat down on the edge of her bed, grabbed her pillow, and snuggled her face into the soft, flannel pillow case and surprisingly went to sleep.

Transition When Mary returned she noticed that Sara had fallen asleep.

Action develops character of Mary as protector.

She gently laid Sara down, tucked her in tight, and softly kissed her forehead. Mary walked over to her bed on the other side of the room and laid down. She turned off the lamp on her night stand beside her bed and then realized that the lamp on her sisters little pink painted night stand was burning dimly. Mary got up once more, went over to Sara's bed and turned the carrousel lamp off. A

Transition few hours later...

"Mary," Sara said, "Mary did you hear that."

"Hear what," replied Mary.

"That noise it sounded like it came from the living room. I hope the Christmas tree is still there," said Sara in a scared voice.

Dialogue establishes the conflict to be resolved in the story.

"Don't worry, at least it was when I went to the bathroom about 10 minutes ago. Besides it's so big you would have to take it down to get it out the door," Mary reassured Sara.

descriptive language and strong verbs



"Maybe you heard Santa, let's go to sleep fast. If he knows we are awake he might take our presents back," Mary used as an excuse to get Sara to go to sleep.

Without a word Sara ran to her bed and laid down and went to sleep with a smile on her face. Mary walked over to her bed and laid down too, but did not go to sleep. She laid on her side facing Sara and tried her best to listen for any unusual noises before she drifted off to sleep herself.

Transition Later that night, Sara was awakened again by the same noise she had heard earlier.

Dialogue Advances plot and builds suspense "Mary, wake up, Mary," Sara said in a quiet yet threatening voice. "Are you awake!, Did you hear it!, Are you awake!" "I am now," replied Mary in a harsh but quiet tone, as she tried to get her eyes open.

"You don't sound like you are," Sara said giving her a I-don't-think-so look.

"I am, okay. Now what do you want," Mary demanded.

"I heard that noise again, please go look. I'll go with you if you will, please," Sara pleaded.

"Okay, if you'll quit bothering me, I'll go. Get a flashlight." Mary said.

"Got it, let's go," said Sara excitedly

Slowly, they crept through the hall, trying to be as quite as possible so they wouldn't wake momma and poppa. They could see the angel on top of the Christmas tree from the hallway. The angel glowed in the darkness. It was holding a candle and had wings that moved as if it was flying. Ribbons were flowing down her dress like the small pink streamers at Sara's birthday party, but smaller. Mary and Sara could see more and more of the Christmas tree as they tiptoed slowly toward the living room.

Quietly Mary tugged at Sara's nightgown and started to whisper to her, but before she could say anything the tree started shaking. The ornaments were swinging back and forth and some fell to the floor and rolled by their feet. The floor rattled and shook

Details develop characters.

descriptive language and strong verbs throughout

Specific details develop plot.

as the ornaments bounced tragically off the floor. The girls stood there with their mouths open and couldn't make a sound they were so scared. All at once Sara made a dash back toward the bedroom and Mary followed on her heels.

*Details  
build  
suspense.*

When they reached their room and had the door locked, Mary said. "What in the world is going on."

Sara replied breathlessly, "I don't know but I'm not going back out there, Christmas or not."

Sara ran to her bed and buried herself under the covers. Mary stood by the locked door trying to figure out what could have happened. She wondered if she should wake momma and poppa but was afraid she would get in trouble for being up herself.

*Transition* After awhile she decided she would wait and see if anything else happened. Meanwhile Mary noticed Sara had fallen back asleep with her face red from where she had cried. Mary walked over to the dresser and grabbed a tissue from the candy cane decorated tissue box and wiped Sara's face. Then she sat on the end of her bed with her head in her hands listening. For what, she wasn't sure. Different things ran through her mind. Could it have been Santa, an earthquake or had someone broken into the house and stolen all the presents? The only way she would know was if she went back out there.

*conveys  
character's  
thoughts*

*Varied  
lengths  
and  
structures  
of sentences  
help  
to build  
suspense.*

Mary decided that's what she would do, without Sara this time. She was a scardy cat anyway and would not be much help except for getting them both in trouble for waking momma. Very quietly Mary unlocked the bedroom door and listened. When she didn't hear anything she slowly started down the hallway toward the living room again. So far everything was still and quiet. The angel on the tree glistened in the moonlight but was still. The Christmas tree was just like it was supposed to be, sparkling and shining and all the presents were piled underneath. Mary stood thinking and quickly decided she would hide in the living room closet for awhile and see if anything happened. She slowly made her way to the closet, opened the door, slipped in and closed the

*Details  
and  
language  
continue  
to build  
suspense.*

Varied  
lengths  
and  
structures  
of sentences  
help to  
build  
suspense

door quietly behind her. It sure was dark. Mary almost decided it wasn't a good idea after all but since she was there she might as well wait awhile. She tried to get comfortable among the coats and clutter in the closet.

All of sudden she heard noises again. Mary peeped through the door, got scared and closed it again. Mary had to settle herself down so she wouldn't run out screaming. After awhile she got enough courage to peep through the door again. The tree shook and rustled noisily but not as much as before. She slowly inched out of the closet, looked around and made her way to the tree. She saw a dark shadow between the lower branches of the tree as it slowly moved upward. By now she was more curious than scared. Mary quietly made her way to the tree and peered into the branches but before she could see what was there, she heard a cry from the bedroom. Sara awoke and called her name. Paying no attention to her, Mary took a deep breath for courage and parted the branches of the tree.

Details  
and  
language  
continue  
to build  
suspense.

resolves  
conflict  
through  
dialogue

Two bright green eyes peered back at Mary.

"Chowder, is that you?" Mary said.

"All this time it's been you that's made the tree shake and the ornaments fall off." Mary said relieved.

She picked up Chowder and took her into the bedroom.

"Look Sara, here is our ghost of Christmas."

"Chowder," Sara cried.

It was only the family cat. Chowder was about a year old and full of mischief. She was light brown in color and not really a very pretty cat but we loved her just the same.

"That was you all this time." Sara took Chowder into her arms and kissed her on the top of her head. She took Chowder to her bed and sat her down. Mary sat down on the end of the bed. Chowder walked over to her and curled up on Mary's lap and went to sleep. Even though it was 7 am Sara laid down in her soft sheets and soundlessly went to sleep. Mary gently pushed Chowder off her lap and onto the end of the bed. Chowder didn't

pay any attention to the change, but went to sleep as if she was still in Mary's lap. Mary walked over to her bed laid down and drifted off to sleep once more.

Conclusion connects to the beginning: Mary, Sara, and Chowder are awake when everyone else is asleep.

**NEXT LESSON:**

- experimenting with flashback, foreshadowing, beginning the story in the middle of the action, and other alternatives to chronological order

## GRADE 7 - SHORT STORY

Plot is limited enough to be fully developed in a short story

"Revenge"

It captures essence of the story and creates reader interest.

Ideas and details are placed in chronological order.

"Hey, Rusty," called Jacob Salsbury, the biggest bully in town, from across the street.

"Yeah?" answered Rusty as he exited the candy shop.

"Go check out your bike. See how you like it."

"What did you do to it, Jacob?"

"Oh, I just made a few adjustments. I know you'll like it."

Ha-ha-ha!"

Details develop character.

Dialogue establishes conflict.

descriptive language

Rusty sprinted behind the candy shop where he had left his bike. he was devastated at what he saw. Jacob had slashed the tires so that they were now flat. On top of that he had turned the seat around backwards and taken the chain off. "Oh man! My parents are going to be furious."

Specific details develop plot.

The sad thing was that Rusty was completely defenseless, at least physically. Rusty was a genuine nerd. His moppy brown hair flopped into his eyes as he walked home, which was more than a mile away. Everyone who was not Rusty's friend picked on him, especially Jacob Salsbury.

Details develop character.

At the time, Rusty was not thinking about this. He had his mind focused on how to gain revenge on Jacob.

"Rusty, where on earth have you been?" questioned Mrs. Felps, his mom, as he trudged into the kitchen.

sets up plot (focused purpose)

"Walking home."

"But I thought you rode your bike...."

"Yeah, I did, but Jacob slashed my tires."

"He did what?" she yelled.

Dialogue advances plot.

correct punctuation of dialogue

descriptive language



Transition "He also turned the seat around and took the chain off"  
When Rusty told her this, she grabbed him by the arm and went out to the garage. He showed her the damage and she was outraged.

"I gotta get Jacob back somehow," said Rusty quietly as he walked upstairs to his room. He sat down at his desk and began playing Alien Invader III, his new video game. After about two hours, Mr. Felps came up and made Rusty get in bed. He could not fall asleep, so he just lay there looking at his glow-in-the-dark map of the universe brainstorming ways to get Jacob back. He was going to get him good, really good. While sleeping, Rusty came up with a plan that would make Jacob miserable.

stays focused on purpose of story

Details develop character.

Transition The next morning, Rusty took a shower and got ready for school. He stuffed a tube of superglue into his pocket as he walked out the door. He left earlier than usual to make sure that Jacob would not be there when he arrived.

foreshadowing

specific detail

"Hi, Mr. Slack," said Rusty cheerfully as he passed the principal in the hall. There were very few other students around, which was to his advantage. Rusty walked straight to Mrs. Turner's class and she was not there, so he had the room all to himself. He found the desk where Jacob sat and pulled out the chair. Then, he smeared superglue all over his seat. It was clear, and hardly noticeable. After doing this, Rusty went and sat down at his own desk.

Details develop plot.

The writer doesn't reveal pivotal detail until necessary for reader.

Jacob was the last person to enter the room. When he did, Rusty started sweating and his glasses slid down his nose. Rusty

Details develop character.



was relieved when Jacob sat down, not noticing the glue. The bell rang a few moments later and class was in session.

"Class, the first thing we are going to do today is grammar, so get out your grammar books," said Mrs. Turner, "Yes, Jacob, what is it?"

"Umm... I left my grammar book in my locker. May I go and get it?"

"Yes, but hurry back. Next time, bring it with you, okay?"

Jacob tried to get out of his seat, but he couldn't. His rear end was stuck. "Mrs. Turner," he pleaded, "I can't get up. I'm stuck."

"Oh stop being silly, of course you can."

"But..."

"Jacob if you do not want to receive a zero for today's daily grade, I suggest that you get out of your seat and go to your locker."

"I can't get up. Come over here and have a look for yourself."

Sure enough, Mrs. Turner saw that Jacob was superglued to his chair. By this time, a few of the students were giggling. "Well, I suppose you will have to take your pants off in order to get loose," said Mrs. Turner.

"What?" exclaimed Jacob.

"I don't know anything else that we can do. If you do, I'd be happy to let you try it."

Unwillingly, Jacob did as he was told. The class broke out into a roar of laughter, especially Rusty. Jacob turned as red as a strawberry. He ran to the office in his boxer shorts and called his mom to come pick him up.

Rusty was very pleased with himself. Rather than using strength, Rusty relied on his brain to gain revenge on Jacob. He had a feeling that Jacob would not be bothering him anymore.

#### NEXT LESSON:

- experimenting with alternative methods of concluding a story

Dialogue  
advances  
plot.

Dialogue  
is consistent  
with  
characters.

effective  
language

sensory  
detail

sensory  
detail

Ends by  
resolving  
conflict

## GRADE 8 - SHORT STORY

The Marker Paper Committee read many short stories written by eighth graders. Although many of these stories demonstrated proficient writing skills at the eighth grade level, none is included here for one or more of the following reasons:

- The story dealt with subject matter that was not appropriate for a statewide marker paper.
- The story was too long to make it a useful diagnostic tool for teachers.
- The story demonstrated skills at a higher level than should be expected for grade 8 students.

The Marker Paper Committee will continue to read grade 8 short stories to select an appropriate marker. If you would like to submit a short story written by a grade 8 student for the committee's consideration, please send the story to:

Cherry Boyles  
KDE Marker Paper Project  
1812 Capital Plaza Tower  
500 Mero Street  
Frankfort, KY 40601

## POEM

### GRADES 4 - 8

The writer of a proficient poem demonstrates most or all of the following skills:

#### AUDIENCE/PURPOSE

- meets the reader's needs and expectations by adhering to the conventions of poetry
- focuses on the purpose (e.g., paint a picture, re-create a feeling, tell a story, capture a moment, evoke an image, show an extraordinary perception of the ordinary)
- narrows topic
- uses an individual voice
- creates a title which captures the essence of the piece and creates reader interest

#### IDEA DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT

- uses sensory details
- uses poetic devices (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, imagery)
- creates a mood
- does not sacrifice meaning for rhyme

#### ORGANIZATION

- maintains coherence and unity
- arranges the poem using white space, line breaks, and shape to enhance meaning

#### SENTENCES

- uses line breaks effectively
- employs rhythm, melody, and perhaps rhyme

#### LANGUAGE

- makes language choices based on economy, precision, richness, surprise, impact on the reader
- uses descriptive language
- uses strong verbs and precise nouns
- uses figurative language

#### CORRECTNESS

- spells correctly
- uses correct end punctuation, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes
- capitalizes correctly
- departs legitimately from standard correctness to enhance the meaning of the poem

As students move from grade to grade, they demonstrate growth in the control and complexity with which they use these skills.

## GRADE 4 - POEM

employs rhythm effectively  
arranged in stanzas and  
organized by  
different senses

If I Were A Tree

*title captures  
essence of poem.*

*focuses on creating  
sensory images  
experienced by a  
tree; narrows topic*

If I were a tree I would hear

Birds in their nests up high

*strong  
verb*

Wind blowing through my leaves

Squirrels eating nuts inside me. CRUNCH! *descriptive  
language*

*repetition  
emphasizes  
focus*

If I were a tree I would smell

Flowers beneath my trunk

*descriptive  
language* A stinky skunk wondering around me,  
about to spray

*Details create  
sensory image.*

The gun powder from men hunting around  
me

*makes language choices  
based on description  
and economy*

If I were a tree I would feel

Rain falling through my leaves

*strong  
verb*

Drilling from a woodpecker

Acorns falling from my limbs

*Details create  
sensory image.*

If I were a tree I would see

Boys climbing up my trunk laughing as  
they went

*strong  
verbs*

Bugs crawling inside me, eating away at  
me

*Details create  
sensory image.*

New born birds eating worms

If I were a tree I would taste

Berries next to my trunk

*descriptive  
language*

Sweet honey inside me

Flower pollen from beneath me

If I were a tree

*Details create  
sensory image.*

### NEXT LESSON:

- revising lines to follow a pattern (noun + ing-word. . .)

## GRADE 4 - POEM

I Am a Big Sister.

Little captures essence of the poem: to recreate her feelings of being a big sister.

Sensory details

Strong verb

I am going to be a big sister.

I am curious if it's a boy or girl.

I am worried if it's alright.

I dream about holding it in my arms.

I am going to be a big sister.

Specific details  
support main idea.

I am a big sister.

I found out it's a boy!

I love him and care for him.

I can't wait to see him in his baby bed.

I am a big sister.

precise pronouns

Specific details  
support main idea.

Strong Verbs

I hold him at the hospital.

I look at him through the window.

I imagine him at home.

I wonder about him.

I am a big sister.

Specific details  
support main idea

Strong Verbs

I hug my mom when she's sad.

I wash her tears away.

I think about him deep down inside.

I pray for him each night.

I am a big sister.

Specific details  
support main idea

Repetition of last line of stanzas underscores purpose.

Repetition of "I + verb" creates rhythm.

- uses individual voice
- coherent, unified
- effectively organized by stanzas
- logical line breaks
- language choices based on economy and reader impact
- spells correctly

### NEXT LESSON:

- experimenting with poetry that is not based on a formula



## GRADE 5 - POEM

*sets  
mood  
and  
tone*

Twass the night before the test  
And all through the school,  
Everyone was so nervice  
No one was cool.

They knew it was coming  
They had to prepare,  
So they took home thier books  
And studied with care.

While the students were studing  
Upstairs in thier rooms,  
They were looking for answers  
To avoid sure doom.

*specific language*

With thier lights turned on  
And thier books open wide,  
They studied thier notes  
Then set them aside.

You see it's hard to study  
When you're in a bad mood,  
So they went to the kitchen  
To gather some food.

*strong verb*

There was no food in sight  
Not a bite anywhere,  
The "fridge" was all empty  
And the kitchen was bare.

*descriptive  
language*

Then they looked at the wall  
And saw a painting of Mona Lisa,  
Then they picked up the phone  
And ordered some pizza.

They ordered a large

- successful parody
- focuses on telling a story
- maintains unity
- rhyme and rhythm are generally driven by meaning
- poem is logically organized into stanzas
- uses individual voice



Then went back to work,  
They studied thier notes  
Then turned with a jerk.

*continues parody*

The phone begain ringing  
Thier pizza was on it's way,  
With the driver in a car  
And not in a sliegh.

*continues parody*

When what to thier wondering  
Eyes should appear,  
But a VoltsWagon Beetle  
Filled with good cheer.

*continues parody*

With a fat little driver  
Thats not very quick,  
They knew in a moment  
It was Domino Mick.

*continues parody*

He gave them thier pizza  
They tried not to wait,  
But the pizza was cold  
And it was getting late.

*strong verb* They were starting to panic *descriptive language connects to purpose*  
They were pacing the hall,  
They needed some help  
Oh! who could they call?

"Call Susan, call Kendra  
call Katie and Sara,  
call Richard, call Andy,  
call Peter and Clara.

*continues parody*

They needed some help  
They're at wits end,

*descriptive language connects to purpose*

They need someone  
On whom they can depend.

As with any subject  
You want to do your best,  
You study real hard  
So you can ace the test.

*reinforces tone  
and mood*

So back to the phone  
To make one last call,  
They weren't giving up  
They were giving their all.

It was getting late  
So who could they ask,  
To help them complete  
This important task.

They put thier heads together  
And came up with a plan,  
They'd make themselves a quiz  
Then answer the best they can.

From thier notes and thier books  
They made up a test,  
Each taking turns to answer  
To see who was the best.

From pullies to magnets  
From rockets to rocks,  
The questions got harder  
With each tick of the clock.

*specific details*

But each question helped them  
In every best way,  
For the test that was before them

On the upcoming day.

It was getting late

So they jumped in thier beds,

*strong verb*

While all of the answers

Were fresh in thier heads.

*descriptive language*

When they got up the next morning

And packed up thier stuff,

*strong verb*

They knew alot of answers

But was it enough?

*reinforces tone and mood*

They arrived at school

And sat at thier desks,

They sharpened thier pencils

*strong verb*

Now bring on the test!

The teacher walked in

And scurried around,

*strong verb*

She looked for the test

But they were not to be found.

So she looked at the students

And cracked a big smile,

*strong verb*

Merry Christmas to all

Now lets party awhile.

*continues parody*

#### NEXT LESSONS:

- building on use of precise and descriptive language
- creating a title
- using spellcheck

## GRADE 5 - POEM

*Title captures  
essence of poem  
and contributes  
to the picture.*

### TREE

TREES WILL STAND, QUIET  
AND STILL, AND YOU CAN WATCH  
THEM FROM YOUR WINDOW SILL. SQUIRRLS  
WILL SCAMPER ON THEIR LIMBS, THEIR TAILS  
ALL BUSHY, NEVER TRIMMED. AND IF YOU  
LOOK, IN THE RIGHT PLACES, YOU  
WILL FIND INSECTS IN  
SECRET SPACES.

*descriptive  
language*

TREES ARE THE  
SOURCE OF ENDLESS  
WONDER, FROM NUTS  
AND FRUITS TO MOUNTAINS  
OF COLOR. AND JUST A REMINDER  
BETWEEN YOU AND ME, IT NEVER HURTS

TO PLANT A TREE.

← *space  
emphasizes  
purpose.*

- adheres to conventions of poetry
- focuses on creating a visual image while showing characteristics of a tree
- Shape enhances meaning (concrete poetry).
- maintains rhythm and rhyme
- does not generally sacrifice meaning for rhyme
- narrows topic

#### NEXT LESSON:

- planning line breaks to enhance meaning while still maintaining concrete shape of poem

GRADE 5 - POEM

Rain

Dark Clouds begin to crawl across the sky.  
Then suddenly I hear a strange sound.

personification

*Pitter, Patter*

*Pitter, Patter*

onomatopoeia

little  
drops  
of  
water  
fall

It is raining!

Each drop talks as it  
Hits

personification

The  
Ground.

*Pitter, Patter*

*Pitter, Patter*

The thunder answers with an angry **BOOM!**

personification  
onomatopoeia

A streak of light flies across the sky.

sensory details

The rain comes

down harder.

Then there is silence.

The rain stops.

descriptive language

The sky turns blue and the sun glistens.

- focuses on capturing a moment
- narrows topic
- creates a mood
- Uses line breaks, white space, and change in font to enhance meaning.

NEXT LESSON:

- using imagery to show instead of tell (i.e., *hear a strange sound, there is silence*)

## GRADE 6 - POEM

### Little Old Lady

She sits in the park on a little old bench,

Feeding the robin, bluebird, and finch.

She sits wrapped up all chilly and cold,

descriptive  
language

She imagines she has riches, silver, and gold.

She imagines a house warm and snug,

contrast

With lace curtains and a jewel beaded rug.

She imagines a turkey and raspberry, cranberry sauce,

Then she comes back and realizes her lose.

Thinking of all that isn't hers,

connects to  
beginning

She remembers what she does have warmth, food, and the birds.

So whenever you wish you had so much more,

Remember the good things and don't be sore.

purpose

- adheres to conventions of poetry
- focuses on creating an image to teach a lesson
- creates a mood
- generally maintains rhythm
- coherent, unified

#### NEXT LESSONS:

- creating an effective conclusion without sacrificing meaning for rhyme
- organizing into stanzas with line breaks to reflect rhyme scheme



## GRADE 6 - POEM

### THE PEN LOST ITSELF

Title captures essence of the poem.

Repetition reveals the importance of the pen and sets up Mom's reaction.

Hey, Mom!

You know that pen,

That you really loved,

That you got as a going away present,

That you used all the time,

That had your name on it?

You know, the one that I borrowed.

- focuses on showing an extraordinary perception of the ordinary
- economy of language
- individual voice
- organized logically
- effective line breaks
- unified

Well that pen,

Kind of lost me.

I didn't lose it,

It lost me!

How could it do that?

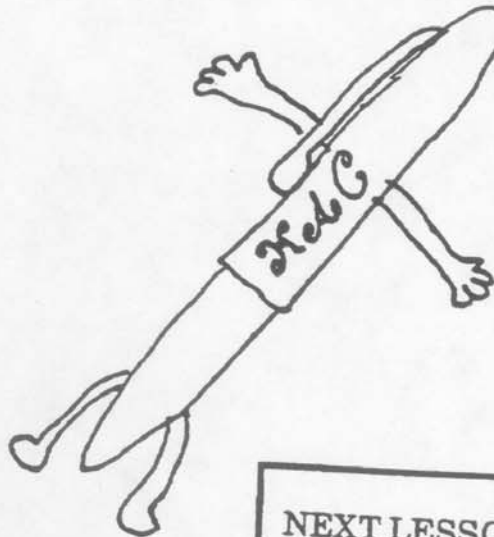
language surprises the reader

personification

"JANE DOE!!!!!"

Good bye!

Last line describes poet's reaction to Mom in one word.



#### NEXT LESSON:

- creating a title that preserves mystery

## GRADE 7 - POEM

- follows conventions of a poem

### Adam, My Brother, My Friend

Use of participles gives reader a sense of immediacy and movement.

Details recreate writer's feelings for the reader.

Opening up the cedar chest where our family treasures are held, my eyes lay upon some of the memories we shared together.

precise noun  
imagery

logical organization - I pull out the first box and I see your baby blanket wrapped in tissue:

details

effective line breaks

creates a mood

soft as cotton, blue like a spring sky, and the scent of cedar. I pick it up and a slight shiver comes over me.

similes

alliteration

The next box I discovered held

the Christening Outfit

precise noun - Capitalization underscores significance of the outfit.

that each of us wore for our Baptism: a soft, pale yellow gown with a white, satin ribbon to tie at the feet, and a beautiful, matching blanket.

details

I hold it close to my heart where all of my memories are stored.

imagery (like the cedar chest)

I suddenly ponder about the wonderful, fun times we had together.

creates mood

However, a solemn sadness surrounds me.

alliteration, personification

Picking up your baby book, I open it and see your pictures taped inside.

somewhat consistent use of present tense verbs for action related to chest and past tense verbs for action related to the memories

One picture captured you sitting in your pumpkin seat.

strong verb

Warm droplets of tears course down my face.

strong verb

Remembering how we once danced to the music of the movie "Rocky II," I speak to myself, "I love you, Adam."

alliteration

I tenderly remove a picture showing your bright, golden smile as you sat in your Big Wheel, giving the camera a "thumbs up."

effective language

I wish you were still alive!

Tears race down my face while I speak under my breath,

strong verb

"Why did you have to die?"

Why did you have to leave us?

repetition for emphasis

Adam, you were my brother and my friend! I love you!"

no errors in correctness

#### NEXT LESSONS:

- controlling verb tense
- changing all sentences to phrases to learn another style of poetry

## GRADE 8 - POEM

- focuses on painting a picture and capturing a moment

### REACH FOR THE STARS

Title captures essence of poem.

The (midnight/sky

creates a mood

(Outlines) his dark (old) limbs

He (reaches) for the stars

effective line breaks

personification throughout

as the moonlight (dims)

and (just out of reach)

they laugh

Line lengths help to create the image.

so it seems

all the same

this (old, old) tree

Language choices show precision and economy.

will (stretch) for the stars

and his (sprawling thin hands)

will (just miss)

the (wink), and the (gleam).

descriptive language

Shows insight into purpose of poem

### NEXT LESSON:

- punctuating poetry to enhance effect on reader

This poem was originally published in the *Kentucky English Bulletin*, Spring 1995.

# GRADE 8 - POEM

• focuses on the distance between poet and other girl

• illustration helps to achieve purpose for the reader.

"It Ain't Fair" title captures essence of poem and creates reader interest.

She watches from a distance, far back in an alley, creates mood of distance

she watches them play.  
"No, I want that dolly!" she hears one girl say.

She cries and cries, tries to wash away the pain imagery  
with salty tears that fall emotive detail  
like rain. simile

She looks at their dresses, descriptive language  
and then their curled tresses.  
Like little princesses they look, captured view of the poet  
the ones from the story book.

(It ain't fair, it ain't fair!) captures voice of the poet  
"Why can't I be like them?" she wonders, "I'm  
just like a little rat,

that wanders 'round the streets, and  
no one likes looking at.  
And look at my face, so ugly and dirty,  
oh what a disgrace.

Torn and ripped are my only clothes,  
everything about me I just loathe."  
They don't realize how lucky they are,  
to them my world seems so far, reinforces distance  
it doesn't even exist to them.

They don't appreciate what they got, captures voice of poet  
They don't know, They just don't know.

They've got everything,  
little music boxes, like birds they sing, simile  
with sweet gentle notes,

and fathers that own really big boats.  
They go sailing at sea, with the breeze in their face, contrast  
but see that's not me, I don't go no place.

(It ain't fair, it ain't fair!) captures voice of poet  
how I wish instead of here, that I was out there. reinforces distance

## NEXT LESSONS:

- maintaining rhythm
- selecting precise words; not sacrificing meaning for rhyme

Repetition for emphasis

